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## Review of *The Whatifs* by Emily Kilgore

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*The Whatifs*

Kilgore, Emily

Illustrated by Zoe Persico

Little Bee Books. New York, NY, 2020

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“What if I mess up? What if my dog runs away? What if I forget my homework?” These are all questions Cora asks herself throughout the beginning of the book. Riddled with anxiety, Cora becomes more and more miserable as her anxious thoughts grow louder and louder. These thoughts only worsen when the day of her piano recital arrives. Feeling weighed down by the Whatifs, Cora is not sure she will be able to play at all; that is, until Stella arrives. Stella encourages Cora to turn her bad, ugly Whatifs into hopeful ones. “What if I play better than ever? What if I CAN do this?” Stella’s encouragement brings a new perspective to Cora’s thoughts, and the readers can see her apply this newfound hope in the final pages of the story. This book is an excellent resource for parents or teachers who desire to inform young students about mental illness, specifically anxiety. By designing the “Whatifs” as little bug-like creatures that hold onto people, students can imagine their own anxieties this way, and nurture their anxious thoughts into thoughts of hope. In a pandemic-ridden age like the world is facing today, children are surrounded by constant anxiety. They may fear getting sick, or someone in their family getting sick. They may worry that they will never go back to school or see their friends. This book allows the conversation about these anxieties to be initiated, and with a little patience and support, hopefully help parents and guardians alleviate them. **Highly Recommended** *Katie Gosman, Centennial Library Intern, Cedarville University.*